

V. REMARKS

Claims 1, 3 and 6 are rejected under 35 USC 102 (b) as being anticipated by Okada (U.S. Patent No. 5,441,447). The rejection is respectfully traversed.

Okada teaches a coin dispenser for paying out coins through a discharge port upon receipt of a pay-out instruction that includes a discharge section, a sensor, a counting device and a controller. The discharge section discharges the coins toward the discharge port. The sensor is arranged at the discharge port for generating a detection signal upon detecting a the coin. The counting device counts the detection signals so as to generate a count signal. The controller drives the discharge section in accordance with the pay-out instruction and stops the discharge section from actuation to complete the pay-out when the count value of the coin signal equals a predetermined number of coins to be paid out. But controller detects a condition wherein a detection signal is present prior to driving the discharge section and prevents the discharge section from commencing operation upon detection of the condition.

Claim 1, as amended, is directed to a gaming machine that includes a front panel, a medal storage unit and a guide member. Claim 1 recites that the front panel is attached to a front of a main body and is formed with a generally rectangularly-shaped opening defined by a horizontally-extending lower face, a horizontally-extending upper face opposing the lower face and a pair of vertically-extending, spaced-apart side faces opposing one another and interconnecting the upper and lower faces thereby forming the opening. Claim 1 also recites that the medal storage unit is attached to the front panel and configured to store a medal provided from the opening. Further, claim 1 recites that the guide member is attached to the main body and configured to guide the medal into the opening. Additionally, claim 1 recites that the guide member has an inner face slanting downwardly toward the opening and a projection formed as an integral construction with the guide member and the projection projects away from the inner face of the guide member and is disposed

either adjacent to or at least partially within the opening and adjacent to and vertically above the lower face of the opening.

It is respectfully submitted that the rejection is improper because the applied art fails to teach each and every element of claim 1 as amended. Specifically, it is respectfully submitted that the applied art fails to teach that a guide member has an inner face slanting downwardly toward an opening and a projection formed as an integral construction with the guide member and the projection projects away from the inner face of the guide member and is disposed either adjacent to or at least partially within the opening and adjacent to and vertically above the lower face of the opening. As a result, it is respectfully submitted that claim 1 is allowable over the applied art.

Claims 3 and 6 depend from claim 1 and include all of the features of claim 1. Thus, it is respectfully submitted that the dependent claims are allowable at least for the reason claim 1 is allowable as well as for the features they recite.

Withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

Claim 2 is rejected under 35 USC 103 (a) as being unpatentable over Okada in view of Casanova et al. (U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2002/0130011). The rejection is respectfully traversed.

Casanova discloses a coin processing machine that includes a coin input region for receiving the coins, a coin processing region for processing the coins and a coin output region for receiving the coins that have been processed from the coin processing region. The processing machine includes a coin path leading from the coin input region, through the coin processing region and into the coin output region. The coin path is partially defined by a coin-impact surface made of a laminated metal, preferably laminated steel. The laminated metal acts to absorb more of the energy for the impact of the coins and, thus, reduces the noise levels produced by coins.

Claim 2, as amended, is directed to a gaming machine that includes a front panel, a medal storage unit, a guide member and a cover member. Claim 2 recites that the front panel is attached to a front of a main body and is formed with a generally rectangularly-shaped opening defined by a horizontally-extending lower face, a horizontally-extending upper face opposing the lower face and a pair of vertically-extending, spaced-apart side faces opposing one another and interconnecting the upper and lower faces thereby forming the opening. Claim 2 recites that the medal storage unit is attached to the front panel and configured to store a medal provided from the opening. Also, claim 2 recites that the guide member is attached to the main body and is configured to guide the medal into the opening with the guide member having an inner face slanting downwardly toward the opening and a projection formed as an integral construction with the guide member. Further, claim 2 recites that the cover member is configured to cover the inner face of the guide member and has a projection projecting away from the inner face of the guide member and is disposed either adjacent to or at least partially within the opening and adjacent to and vertically above the lower face of the opening.

It is respectfully submitted that none of the applied art, alone or in combination, teaches or suggests the features of claim 2 as amended. Specifically, it is respectfully submitted that the applied art, alone or in combination, fails to teach or suggest that a cover member is configured to cover an inner face of a guide member and has a projection projecting away from the inner face of the guide member and disposed either adjacent to or at least partially within the opening and adjacent to and vertically above the lower face of the opening. Thus, it is respectfully submitted that one of ordinary skill in the art could not combine the features of the applied art to arrive at the claimed invention because the applied art is devoid of all the features of the claimed invention. As a result, it is respectfully submitted that claim 2 is allowable over the applied art.

Withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

Claim 4 is rejected under 35 USC 103 (a) as being unpatentable over Okada in view of Davies (U.S. Patent No. 4,326,621). The rejection is respectfully traversed.

Davies teaches a coin detecting apparatus for distinguishing genuine coins from slugs.

Claim 4 depends from claim 1 and includes all of the features of claim 1. Thus, it is respectfully submitted that the dependent claim is allowable at least for the reasons claim 1 is allowable as well as for the features it recites.

Withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

Claim 5 is rejected under 35 USC 103 (a) as being unpatentable over Itsuji (JP 2001-054614) (and presumptively in view of Okada as mentioned at the top of page 5 of the Office Action). The rejection is respectfully traversed.

Itsuji teaches a slot machine that includes a branch guide member.

As indicated by the Office Action, Itsuji excludes a lower face of the opening position below the slanted plane of the guide member. The Office Action indicates that the Applicant has not disclosed that having the lower face of the opening positioned below the slanted plane of the guide member provides an advantage, is used for a particular purpose or solves a stated problem. It is respectfully submitted that assertion is incorrect.

On page 2 of the specification, it states:

[0004] However, due to the surface of the front panel being plated, there arises a problem that the medal paid out to the medal receiving tray 14 through the return passage 21 hits with the lower face of the opening of the front panel and the plating in the vicinity of the lower face of the opening of the front panel has a possibility to become off and to be broken.

[0005] It is therefore an object of the invention to provide a gaming machine for preventing a medal from hitting with the lower face of an opening of a front panel and preventing breakage in the vicinity of the lower face of the opening of the front panel.

Furthermore, as admitted by the Examiner, it is respectfully submitted that none of the applied art, alone or in combination, teaches or suggests the features of claim 5. Specifically, it is respectfully submitted that the applied art, alone or in combination, fails to teach or suggest a lower face of the opening is positioned below the plane. Thus, it is respectfully submitted that one of ordinary skill in the art could not combine the features of the applied art to arrive at the claimed invention because the applied art is devoid of all the features of the claimed invention. As a result, it is respectfully submitted that claim 5 is allowable over the applied art.

Withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

Claim 8 is rejected under 35 USC 103 (a) as being unpatentable over Okada. The rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claim 8 depends from claim 1 and includes all of the features of claim 1. Thus, it is respectfully submitted that the dependent claim is allowable at least for the reasons claim 1 is allowable as well as for the features it recites.

Withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

It is respectfully submitted that the Examiner has apparently forgotten to examine claim 7. It is respectfully submitted that that the Examiner examine this claim and provide the Applicants with the results of his examination in a subsequent non-final Office Action.

It is respectfully submitted that the pending claims are believed to be in condition for allowance over the prior art of record. Therefore, this Amendment is believed to be a complete response to the outstanding Office Action. Further,

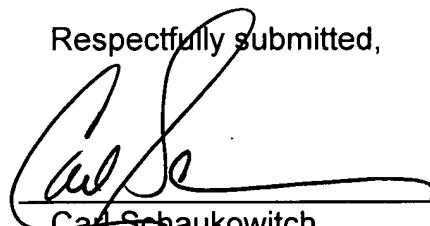
Applicants assert that there are also reasons other than those set forth above why the pending claims are patentable. Applicants hereby reserve the right to set forth further arguments and remarks supporting the patentability of their claims, including the separate patentability of the dependent claims not explicitly addressed herein, in future papers.

In view of the foregoing, reconsideration of the application and allowance of the pending claims are respectfully requested. Should the Examiner believe anything further is desirable in order to place the application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact Applicants' representative at the telephone number listed below.

Should additional fees be necessary in connection with the filing of this paper or if a Petition for Extension of Time is required for timely acceptance of the same, the Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge Deposit Account No. 18-0013 for any such fees and Applicant(s) hereby petition for such extension of time.

Respectfully submitted,

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Enclosure(s): Amendment Transmittal

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